



2015 READY Accountability Background Brief

This briefing paper provides basic background information to help you understand the 2014-15 school accountability data, including the School Performance Grades.

The 2014-15 school year was the third year under the state's READY accountability model.

The READY initiative has three components:

- A *Standard Course of Study* focused on the most critical knowledge and skills that students need to learn to be successful at the next grade level and after high school.
- End-of-grade and end-of-course assessments that are more rigorous and use open-ended questions and real-world applications of student learning that require students to express their ideas clearly with supporting facts.
- An accountability model that measures how well schools are doing to ensure that students are career and college ready upon high school graduation.

Data being released to State Board of Education members at their Sept. 2 meeting will provide insight into student academic progress and school performance in 2014-15. This includes student performance on end-of-grade and end-of-course assessments based on five achievement

levels, overall student proficiency on end-of-grade and end-of-course assessments, academic growth, School Performance Grades, and graduation rates.

With respect to School Performance Grades, it is important to note that schools again will be graded using a 15-point grading scale, and grades will continue to be based on the school's achievement score (80 percent) and students' academic growth (20 percent).

Information contained in this background brief will provide more details into the state's READY accountability model.

Achievement Levels

To better report students' career and college readiness, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction uses a five-level achievement scale:

Achievement Level 1: Limited Command

Achievement Level 2: Partial Command

Achievement Level 3: Sufficient Command
(Grade-Level Proficiency)

Achievement Level 4: Solid Command
(Career and College Readiness)

Achievement Level 5: Superior Command
(Career and College Readiness)

Achievement Level 3 identifies students who have a sufficient command of grade-level knowledge and skills in the tested content areas (English language arts, math and science) to move on to the next grade, but who may need additional academic support to be on track for career and college readiness. Achievement Levels 4 and 5 indicate students are on track to be career and college ready by the time they graduate from high school.

TIMELINE

June 30, 2015

Local school systems submit accountability data to the NCDPI

July-August 2015

NCDPI engages in data check for local districts

September 2, 2015

End-of-Grade proficiency, End-of-Course proficiency, high school indicators, academic growth, School Performance Grades, as well as graduation rate presented at State Board of Education meeting

October 15, 2015

NC School Report Cards released



Here are the state assessments that students take:

GRADE	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)	MATHEMATICS	SCIENCE	OTHER
3	Beginning-of-Grade/End-of-Grade	End-of-Grade	–	–
4	End-of-Grade	End-of-Grade	–	–
5	End-of-Grade	End-of-Grade	End-of-Grade	–
6	End-of-Grade	End-of-Grade	–	–
7	End-of-Grade	End-of-Grade	–	–
8	End-of-Grade	End-of-Grade	End-of-Grade	ACT® Explore
9	–	Math I	–	–
10	English II	–	Biology	ACT Plan
11	–	–	–	The ACT
12	–	–	–	ACT WorkKeys

Here are the measures that are included in North Carolina's reports:

ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL INDICATORS			HIGH SCHOOL INDICATORS	
3rd Grade ELA	3rd Grade Math	5th Grade Science	ASSESSMENTS	OTHER MEASURES
4th Grade ELA	4th Grade Math	8th Grade Science	Biology	4-year and 5-year Graduation Rates
5th Grade ELA	5th Grade Math	Math I	English II	Successful completion of high-level
6th Grade ELA	6th Grade Math	Biology	Math I	math courses
7th Grade ELA	7th Grade Math		The ACT	
8th Grade ELA	8th Grade Math		The ACT WorkKeys	

Annual Measurable Objectives

Schools will continue to be measured against Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) as those are a requirement of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), formerly known as No Child Left Behind. This is to ensure that attention remains focused on closing performance gaps among student subgroups. AMO are a series of performance targets that states, school districts and specific subgroups of students must achieve each year to meet the federal law's requirements. AMO targets are available online at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/reporting/amao/targettables1213.pdf>.

Read to Achieve

The 2014-15 school year was the second implementation year for the state's Read to Achieve program. The program's goal is to ensure that every third grade student is reading at or above grade level by the end of the school year. Students who are not reading at grade level by the end of third grade receive extra support, including reading camps, multiple opportunities to show proficiency, guaranteed uninterrupted blocks of reading time, and intensive reading interventions so that they will be more prepared to do fourth-grade work.

At their October meeting, State Board of Education members will receive a report on the success of the program's second year that will include:

- the number and percentage of students demonstrating and not demonstrating proficiency on end-of-grade;
- the number and percentage of students who take and pass an alternative assessment;

- the number and percentage of students retained (this would include students who are physically retained and students retained with a retained reading label); and
- the number and percentage of students with a Good Cause Exemption (this would include portfolio, limited English proficient, exceptional children and multiple retentions).

School Performance Grades

The 2014-15 school year is the second year for which public schools and charter schools will receive a letter grade under the General Assembly's A-F School Performance Grades. The grades will be based on the school's achievement score and on students' academic growth. The final grade will continue to be based on a 15-point scale.

In 2014-15, schools had the opportunity to earn an A^{NG} for their School Performance Grade. Schools receiving this grade earned an A and did not have a significant achievement gap that was larger than the largest state average achievement gap. This additional designation was added to address federal requirements that the highest designation not be awarded to schools with significant achievement gaps.

K-8 READY Accountability Model Components

- Statewide accountability testing is done in grades 3-8 only. For students in grades K-2, special age-appropriate assessments are used to chart students' academic progress and are not included in the READY accountability model.
- End-of-grade assessments in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 and science assessments in grades 5 and 8 are counted for academic growth, performance and AMO. NCEXTEND1 is an alternate assessment for certain students with disabilities and is included in performance and AMO only, not in growth.

High School READY Accountability Model Components

- **End-of-Course Tests** – Student performance on three end-of-course assessments: English II, Biology and Math I is counted for growth, performance and AMO. NCEXTEND1 is an alternate assessment for certain students with disabilities and is included in performance and AMO only, not in growth.
- **The ACT** – The percentage of students meeting the UNC system admissions minimum requirement of a composite score of 17.
- **Graduation Rates** – The percentage of students who graduate in four years or less and five years or less.
- **Math Course Rigor** – The percentage of graduates taking and passing high-level math courses such as Math III.

- **ACT WorkKeys** – For Career and Technical Education concentrators (students who have earned four CTE credits in a career cluster), the percentage of concentrator graduates who were awarded at least a Silver Level Career Readiness Certificate based on ACT WorkKeys assessments.
- **Graduation Project** – The accountability report will note whether a school requires students to complete a graduation project.

Understanding the Three Accountability Measures

- **Performance** – The percentage of students in the school who score at Achievement Levels 1-5. Achievement Level 3 is considered grade-level proficiency and Achievement Levels 4 and 5 are considered on track to be college and career ready.
- **Growth** – An indication of the rate at which students in the school learned over the past year. The standard is roughly equivalent to a year's worth of growth for a year of instruction. Growth is reported for each school as Exceeded Growth Expectations, Met Growth Expectations, or Did Not Meet Growth Expectations.
- **AMO Status** – Whether the students in the school as a whole and in each identified subgroup met the performance targets set by the state with the goal of reducing the percentage of non-proficient students by one-half within six years. The purpose of this is to maintain a spotlight on performance gaps among groups of students so that these gaps can be closed over time.

RESOURCES

READY INITIATIVE – <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/ready/>

READY ANIMATION – The animated READY logo tells the story of why North Carolina has raised standards and made other key changes in public schools in a 2.5 minute video clip. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCNYt5_K6CU&feature=youtu.be

NORTH CAROLINA STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY – <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/>

TESTING PROGRAM GENERAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES – <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/policies/geninfopoliciesindex>

RELEASED TEST FORMS AND ANSWER KEYS FOR END-OF-GRADE AND END-OF-COURSE TESTS – Parents and educators can see firsthand the rigor of questions on the assessments. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/releasedforms>

READ TO ACHIEVE – <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/k-3literacy/achieve/>

2015 READY INFORMATION CONTACTS

READY ACCOUNTABILITY/BASIS FOR STATUS – Accountability Services Division, Tammy Howard, Director, 919.807.3787

COMMUNICATIONS AND GENERAL INFORMATION – Communication and Information Services,

Vanessa Jeter, Director, 919.807.3450

READY DATA BY SCHOOL/DISTRICT/STATE AND PRESS RELEASE – <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting>

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION – <http://www.ncpublicschools.org>